

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 2, 2001

LB 305

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: So ordered.

CLERK: AM1543, Senator. (Legislative Journal pages 1785-1786.)

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Raikes, you're recognized to open.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. This amendment deals with how a reporting requirement for school districts as to funds received for educational opportunities for low-income students, I've passed out a bullet sheet, I think, which I hope you have which will outline this for you. The high school district in each local system would be required to report how funds are spent to enhance educational opportunities for low-income students, including a description of the initiatives, the goals of each initiative, the annual evaluation mechanism for determining progress toward the goals, the most recent evaluation data or base line for new initiatives. If the reported spending is not equal to or greater than the amount generated by the poverty factor, and that would be the poverty factor in the state aid formula, the difference would be subtracted from the next certification of state aid. Obviously, the intent here is to focus on funds in programs for low-income students and to ensure that there is accountability, that there are programs in place, and that the funds intended to address the educational needs of those students, in fact, do go to those students. I think it is something that we need to address and I think this is a good place to address it. I want to say a couple of things, I guess, about the bill, in general, with this amendment, and that would be to remind you that this is a bill that is the Education Committee's attempt to deal with an important public policy issue we face. I'm very proud of the work the committee did or has done on this bill, and I would tell you that...that it is entirely a committee effort. I deserve, really, a very small part if any of the credit. There has been a number of people that have worked toward it. It has the features that I think are needed to address the situation. It makes full recognition of local control. We're requiring local participation by school districts. We're going to provide state funding but we're going to do it on a equalized basis targeting those funds to the places where it is most in need.